

SERVICES.

SUNDAYS:—7.00 A. M. Holy Communion.

10.30 A. M. Morning Prayer and Sermon,
followed by Communion on 1st Sunday in the month.

3.00 P. M. Litany and Catechising,

On 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays.

7.30 P. M. Evening Prayer and Sermon.

WEDNESDAYS:—7.30 P. M. Evening Prayer and Address.

FRIDAYS:—7.30 P. M. Evening Prayer and Bible Lectures.

HOLY DAYS:—10.30 A. M. Holy Communion.

Sunday School and Bible Classes 2.30 P. M.

Chests to receive Tithes and Offerings, near the door.

“Let him that heareth, say, COME.”

“And whosoever will, let him COME.”



“Thou Shalt worship the Lord thy God and
Him only shalt thou Serve.”

ST. STEPHEN CHURCH

Terrace and Hermit Streets,
MANAYUNK, PHILADELPHIA.

PAROCHIAL LETTER.

FIFTH YEAR.

1890—ADVENT—1891.

To the Congregation of St. Stephen Parish, Manayunk:

GREETING:

Peace be with you, and the grace of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. When the spring comes, and the earth's new year begins, then the trees put out new leaves and prepare to bear new fruit. So, as we stand at the beginning of our new year in this parish, let us remember that we must be growing, as the years go by, preparing always to show our Christian life in new ways, and to bear new fruits.

I ask you, therefore, to take this as your Apostolic motto for the new year:—"Increase more and more."

I need hardly remind you that a year ago another name was signed to the Parochial letter; that another Shepherd fed you, and that he has gone to his well earned rest in the glad light of Paradise.

More and more as I move among you I see how faithfully he laid the foundation upon which we now go on to build. While I hope we may together go on and on with new activities both of worship and of service, yet there is nothing he has done that I want to undo.

Look back for a moment over the past year, God's blessings and your work.

The last words of your former Rector to you, on Christmas, a year ago, were these; "Peace I leave with you." It is a blessed memory; and God has given you peace in the Parish.

Then, when death took the Shepherd, you were not left without care. Our good friend, Dr. Tortat, gave kindly and willing attention to the parish during the long vacancy, and God raised up two among your own number who faithfully kept up the Wednesday and Friday night services.

When at last He, in His providence sent me to you, and gave you to me, I found you vigorously at work, and although the "hard times" had depressed everybody, depleted purses, and even driven out of town some of our most faithful members, yet all expenses have been duly met.

The tithes, indeed, have not amounted to as much as during last year; but this is partly due to the fact that some of those who gave the tithe have been without work and have left the parish. Who is now ready to step into the vacant places? Those who give the tithe give the parish stability, and are, under God, the main stay of its financial prosperity.

Our offerings for Church work outside the Parish have been considerably less than last year. Yet they have amounted to over a tenth of our income, and we may be thankful they have been no less.

We have been blessed with a sexton who works "heartily, as unto the Lord," and under his diligent care the Church and Parish House have been kept in good order, and the Church yard has grown yet neater and more seemly.

During the summer a friend furnished paint, and some of our young men set to work and painted the wood-work on the outside of the Church.

The Band has suffered a severe loss in the removal of several of its members; yet it is waking up for better work this winter, and the faithful quartette still leads the Sunday school in processions and in the service.

The Literary Society is growing, and starts out with improved rules for the coming winter.

There have been 12 Baptisms, 5 Burials, 2 Marriages. Three Communicants have been transferred to other parishes, and three received. The parish being without a Rector there were no Confirmations.

Money to the amount of \$500.00 has been given for the building of a Rectory. I earnestly wish that we might soon add to this enough to buy the lot above the Church and build on it a fit house as a memorial of your first Rector the Rev. Mr. Bonnell.

All thanks to God for these gifts and encouragements. Our Parish tree has done well, by His blessing.

What new leaves and new fruit, then are we to put forth this year?

In the first place, I hope soon to get the Decuries into better shape,

and set each some definite work, in caring for the Church, in distributing tracts and printed matter, and in other lines.

It is proposed also in a week or two to organize a men's Bible class under the care of the Rector.

In addition to this, it is hoped that we shall soon be able to organize a Chapter of the great Brotherhood of St. Andrew; an organization of men for the spread of Christ's kingdom.

The Vestry have given the Rector their consent to offer the use of our Reading Room to a men's club which it is proposed to organize under his care. The object of the club being to associate the men of our neighborhood for mutual improvement. When we see how commonly men gather together in saloons and pool rooms and cigar stores, and drift away to the devil just because they have no place meeting near the Church and frequented by the Church people, the advisability of such a club seems evident.

In the Sunday school it is proposed to grade the work more definitely, and to adopt a system of marks, so that the work of the scholars may be better judged, and they incited to more carefulness by knowing that their acquirements and defects are noted.

In this connection, let the Rector ask parents to see that their children prepare their lessons at home as carefully as they prepare for the day school.

But let us not forget that increase in Christian activity means increase in worship as well as in work. We need, each year, to ask, "Am I giving as much time as I ought to private prayer?" And if so, "Am I praying as fervently and carefully as I should?" And again "Am I as faithful as I should be in public worship?"

All the public services customary last year will be continued; and a night service is to be held every Sunday hereafter, for the sake of those who want it, or are unable to go to the Morning Prayer, or who would go wandering elsewhere.

This seems a long catalogue of works; and it will surely take much grace to carry it out well. It is partly for this very reason that we have made one other addition to the public services. The Holy Communion is now Celebrated every Sunday and Holy Day. In that sacrament, as you have been faithfully taught in past years, Our Lord Jesus feeds our souls and gives us strength for doing duty. The more work we undertake, the more frequently we should be at His Altar for food. The more of that spiritual food we receive, the more work we shall be able to do. I earnestly hope, therefore, that more and more of our people will come often to that Sacrament, and go forth to do more and more for Our Blessed Lord.

One final word to those who are not yet Communicants.

Is it not time for you too to set to work and do something for God? Is it not time for you to say at least this much, "I will try to make my life more like Christ's, more Godly?" And is it not time for you to come and be admitted to His Table? For if you really want to do His work, you need to come and be fed with His food.

The Bishop will visit us for Confirmation on Sunday, February 7. Confirmation classes will be formed during Advent. The Wednesday and Sunday night sermons will be designed specially to help those thinking about Confirmation. I shall be glad to know of any who would like to receive that Blessing.

May God, from whom all strength comes, give you His strength and His peace.

Pray for me, that I may have wisdom to see what God would have done and grace to do it. So I pray, also, for you.

Your Pastor, and

In Christian Sincerity,

Your Friend,

LAURENCE B. RIDGELY,

Parish House, St. Stephen Church, November 26th, 1891.

The Reading Room, in the parish building, needs books, periodicals, pictures, curtains, rugs, decorations, so that it may be an attractive place to sit in.

The Sunday-school work needs to be better done. We who teach in it need to give more time to study and to visiting, and we need also Sunday School hymn books and apparatus, class books, and instruction books.

All these things mean more money; and I hope to see increased offerings. We do not propose to beg for this, nor to go out into the market and trade for it. We, in this parish, understand Christianity better than that; but let me ask each of you to consider how nearly he is giving his due tenth into the treasury of God. If we all do that, we shall have enough and to spare for our parish work. If you do not, you are simply shifting the burden to the shoulders of your neighbor, who will have to give more than his share. I ask you all to weigh well this duty, for I propose before Christmas to adopt some plan of keeping the parish finances in a little more regular order, and will ask each to help.

But, above all, we need more devotion and interest. I hope to see some definite work begun soon among the men and the boys. I ask them to consider the claims of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew. No reason why every communicant should not belong to that. We could have two Chapters if need be—one for men, and one for boys. It is primarily a men's order, not a boys'. But as this is meant only for spiritual and religious work, I hope some time this year to begin an organized work for men and for boys, as well as for young girls. There is great help in such guilds.

I hope to see added interest in the Bible Classes. We hope to have one for women added soon. Such study tends to devotion.

Finally, let me remind you that with Advent we begin a daily service, which I hope to continue on through Lent. Prayer is a bond of union with God, and only by union with Him can we hope to keep strong to labor. So, as the Jews offered the sacrifice daily in the Temple, we shall offer daily a sacrifice of praise and prayer. And if you cannot come yourselves, let me urge you to send the children on their way to school.

The public school instruction is good so far as it goes, but it cannot touch, you forbid it, and rightly forbid it to touch, the religious education. It is most important, then, that children, who at school learn nothing of the duty of prayer, should be taught thus to begin every day with worship before they go to work.

The statistics of the year are as follows:

Twenty-one persons have been baptized; two of these being adults. Twenty-one have been confirmed. There have been three marriages and twelve burials. Twenty-four persons have been added to the roll of communicants. Six communicants, have been transferred to other parishes. Two, Mrs. M. A. Rowley and Mrs. S. A. Harper, have been transferred to the Communion of the Saints in the Church Expectant. God grant them there also growth in grace and fullness of joy and life in the light of Christ. The present number of our enrolled communicants is ninety-nine.

Dear friends, we grow in grace as we grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Let us strive, let us lay our plans this year to use to the full every means of grace, and to keep close to Him by prayer and Sacrament that so this new year and each one succeeding shall find us more and more perfect and fruitful, till we all be filled with all the fullness of God, and the stream of His light beaming forth from this parish lead many souls into the communion of the saints and the blessedness of the Kingdom.

The peace and joy of the Lord be with you, from God, our Father, through the Holy Spirit. AMEN.

Affectionately your Pastor and Friend,

LAURENCE B. RIDGELY.



ST. STEPHEN CHURCH,

Terrace and Hermit Streets,

MANAYUNK, PHILADELPHIA.

PAROCHIAL LETTER.

SIXTH YEAR.

1891—ADVENT—1892.

SERVICES.

SUNDAYS, 7.00 and 10.30 a. m.; and 7.30 p. m.; 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays also 3.00 p. m.

WORK-DAYS, 8.15 a. m., till Trinity-tide; Wednesdays and Fridays, 7.45 p. m.

HOLY DAYS, 6.00 a. m.

SUNDAY SCHOOL, 2.30 p. m.

Chests to Receive Tithes and Offerings at Door.

Thanksgiving Day, November 24th, 1892.

TO MY PEOPLE OF ST. STEPHEN PARISH, MANAYUNK;
DEAR FRIENDS IN THE LORD JESUS.

GREETING:

You may remember that when, one year ago, I wrote about the work of the parish in the previous year and the work to be done in the year then begun, I announced that the custom of a weekly communion had been begun, and that from this fount of strength I looked for increased vigor in our life and new fruit in good works.

That expectation, let us thank God, has been fully justified. True, some works have been begun and have come to naught. A men's club was started, but there seemed to be no need for it, and it was allowed to die. A Bible Class for the Sunday School teachers was kept up all the year, but the Sunday School teachers for the most part failed to come.

The decuries were partly re-organized, but led a rather weakening life, and have been superseded. One does not expect all the blossoms of an orchard to come to fruit, however; and these failures have been far over-balanced by successes.

In the first place the attendance at services throughout the year has been better than last year. And, in evidence that this is no merely superficial increase, God permitted me last Epiphany-tide to present to the Bishop for Confirmation a class of twenty-one persons and these for the most part showed real earnestness in preparation, and have continued faithful. More than this, others since have declared themselves desirous to be confirmed; and when the Bishop comes again I hope to have these and others besides ready to bring to him. I propose to begin lectures, preparatory to Confirmation, in this coming week on Wednesday evening and continue them until the Bishop's visitation.

The increased devotion of the parish life has showed itself in other ways. In the good attendance during Lent and the large and blessed Communion early on Easter Day, and in various works began or well advanced during the year. There has been improvement even in externals. The sanctuary has been carpeted and various alterations made. Better than that, the tithes and offerings have increased in amount, although not as much as they should have increased. The income has been, indeed, larger than usual, but much of the increase was by special gifts for various objects, not by public offerings. The offerings for missions and work outside the parish have been larger than last year. Last Christmas-tide the Sunday School, for the first time, followed the good custom of making a Christmas gift to needy children, instead of merely enjoying a Christmas festival given to themselves. A large box of pleasing presents was sent to St. Michael's Home for Colored Crippled Children.

Early in the year a Chapter of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew was formed and has continued to labor, if not to grow, ever since. The Chapter sent a representative to the Convention at Boston.

The Literary Society met regularly, and with improved excellence in their entertainments. During Lent the meetings were made more devotional and profitable by the use of a special religious service, and the reading of papers on the lives of great Saints and missionaries, ancient and modern.

The Cornet Band for a time seemed in danger of perishing but early in the Summer was disbanded and re-organized and since then has been doing continually better and better work.

A Men's Bible Class was formed at the beginning of Lent, and, though not largely attended, continued until the hot Summer weather. I intend to begin this work again at once, but to hold the meetings on Tuesday evenings in my study, instead of on Sunday afternoons in the Church as before, and will be able to meet the class only once in two weeks, instead of weekly.

The need of a Kindergarten in the parish has been evident to me from the beginning. In January last the way seemed open to begin one. Two or three persons contributed money enough to furnish a room, and a teacher was found willing to undertake the work without other payment than the small fees of the children. The Garden flourished till the Summer closing time. This Fall I was so fortunate as to arrange with our present Kindergartner, Miss Anna F. Muller, to undertake the work, and it has gone on admirably under her able care. I earnestly ask the parents and others to visit the garden from time to time, and specially to attend the Christmas exercises which it is hoped to arrange on December. I am sure no one can do so without feeling and seeing the value of this great institution, which is not intended to take the place of the schools, not intended to teach children to read, nor to write, nor to cipher, but to take them when too young for school, to educate the eye to see rightly, the ear to hear rightly, the hand to handle rightly, the voice to speak and sing rightly, so that when school age comes they may be ready to become scholars.

When I left you eleven weeks and a half ago, I left you not only in the charge of our good friend and earnest-minded priest, the Rev. Edward T. Mabley, who has kindly and diligently ministered to you, and to whom I return sincere thanks. But I also commended you to God and the word of His Grace, telling you I hoped on my return to find you "built up" into a higher stage of parish and of personal life. That hope you have fulfilled, and I thank not only God but also you. Since I left, the Sunday School Library has been replenished and refilled. And the Parish Library also put into usable shape and excellent order. The Band has moved on toward excellence with great strides.

Just before leaving I organized two new chapters of a Parish Guild, an Altar Chapter and a Mothers' Chapter. Both have done most excellent work ever since. The Mothers' Chapter has become, as some one wrote to me, "a power in the parish." So their works testify, the excellent order of the Church and parish house, the new shades and curtains and the general cleanliness. The Altar Chapter has both grown and grown strong, and the beauty and order of the Sanctuary and vestry attest their devotion.

Under the devoted care of our good sexton the church-yard has continued to grow neater and more seemly. The ugly hollow in the yard of the parish house has been filled up, the drainage has been improved, grass has been sown, a walk laid, borders planted and the spot looks as if some one took interest in it.

So I stand like a farmer at harvest time and give God thanks for all your fruit of good works. But, the farmer needs do more. He must lay at once his plans for the next year, and sow very soon his Winter wheat.

What have we to plan for in the year that opens with this Advent?

There is an Organ Fund, which needs to be completed if we are to worship the Lord in the *beauty* of holiness.

There is a Rectory Fund which grows so slowly that it is likely to prove a shame to us instead of an honor to former your Rector, in whose memory the house is to be built, and to whom "honor is due."

The Kindergarten needs support, both from those who have children to send and from those who can contribute money. For remember, all the fees go to the teacher for her living, and, even so, are not large.

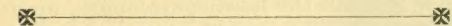
ST. STEPHEN CHURCH,

Terrace and Hermit Streets,
MANAYUNK, PHILADELPHIA.

PAROCHIAL LETTER.

SEVENTH YEAR.

1892—ADVENT—1893.



SERVICES.

SUNDAYS:

- 7.00 a.m., Holy Communion.
- 10.30 a.m., Morning Prayer and Sermon,
(followed by Holy Communion, on 1st Sunday).
- 2.30 p.m., Sunday School.
- 3.15 p.m., Sunday School Service on last Sunday of the Month.
- 7.30 p.m., Evening Service and Address.

WEEK-DAYS:

- 8.15 a.m., Morning Prayer, (except Saturday) during Advent and Lent. Also on **HOLY DAYS**, followed by Holy Communion.
- 7.45 p.m., Evening Prayer, Wednesday and Friday, throughout the year.

"Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice."

TO THE CONGREGATION OF ST. STEPHEN CHURCH,

MANAYUNK, PHILADELPHIA,—

GREETING:—

A year, dear friends, has come and gone since you assembled here last Thanksgiving Day, and now you are here again, and I, of whom you then had not heard, am here with you. We have gathered to ask, like that voice that comes from the Book of Isaiah, "Watchman, What of the night?" We can I trust answer as the watchman did, "The morning cometh,—though the night be not yet quite spent." Does it bring us joy, or fear, to know that we are so long a day's march nearer home? At least something of joy, I trust, for you know that "Perfect love casteth out fear," the peace and joy of God are the heritage of those that fear him.

Mine, you know, will be the third name to be signed to a Parish Letter, which fact suggests a time of great uncertainty through which you passed early this year. We all have much for which to thank God, in the fact that you passed through that crisis with as little loss as you did. And now that God has sent me here to take the place of the two that have gone from you, let us both accept the fact, and pray constantly that God will bless us both, in this relationship, as yet almost untried, and give us grace ever to grow nearer to Him, and into a deeper knowledge of His Truth. Your relations with my predecessors were, I know, greatly blessed. God grant that ours may be, as well.

I have a few words to say about the various organizations of the Parish, and I will say them here.

The Band is perhaps the most conspicuous, by its silence which our neighbours have probably noted of late. But I am confident that its days of usefulness are not over, and that in due time it will awake into as vigorous a life as ever. At present its place is to some extent taken by the Company of the Knights of Temperance, recently formed. This Company is distinctly a Church Society, although not bearing our own Parish name. The Order is the best institution that I have ever known, apart of course from The Church itself, for the development of a well-rounded Christian manliness, and I want to commend Wissahickon Company of the Knights of Temperance, to all who are interested in the welfare of the young men of the neighbourhood. May it live long, and prosper.

Like the Band, the Parish Chapter of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew has been sleeping, but it is now beginning to arouse itself. The Brotherhood does not seek first of all to increase its own membership. Rather does it seek to deepen the spiritual life of those who already belong. But we have room for a few more, and I hope now to see some increase in numbers. We want a few men who will join us, for the sake of the opportunity that we can give them of doing a definite work for Christ. We want men to come to us' and come *determined that they will join*, without our having to urge them. Therefore I hope that some of the men of the Parish are now

ready to put their shoulders to the wheel, and will soon seek the membership of the Brotherhood. There is quiet, unassuming work enough for all, in bringing men to God's House, in making them at home when they come, and in taking care that no one ever goes away feeling that we are a cold and selfish people. It is for this work that men band themselves together in the Brotherhood of St. Andrew.

The Mite Society has continued on its way, and has helped us over many a hard place, by providing for various items of current expense. It has raised during the year nearly \$90.00. Our thanks are due to the faithful collectors, and to all who have contributed through their means.

In praise of the work of the Mothers' Chapter, I cannot say enough. That work has been steady, earnest and faithful, and among other things we have to thank the Chapter for making possible the renovation of the Church, by bearing the expense. I trust and believe that the good work will continue, and increase from year to year.

The work of the Altar Guild has, in general, been very regularly and satisfactorily done. Its importance for the orderly conduct of the services, none can realize as well as the rector. Its praise, like that of all our work, is not of men, but of God,—and I know that the witness of a good conscience is the sufficient reward of the members of the Guild.

The Young Women's Missionary Society is a recent offshoot from the Altar Guild. It has room for many more members, upward of thirteen years of age. It has not been idle, but has yet really to prove its mission. It meets on alternate Tuesday evenings, at 7.30 o'clock, and the officers endeavour to find work for all who come to the meetings. Let us have more members therefore and a desire for wide usefulness, and earnest consecration. The Society has undertaken to repair any clothing that may be sent to the Parish House, to be given to those in need. Almost any clothing can be utilized, even if far gone, but none should be sent unless clean. *The need of clothing is very great at present.*

It gives me great pleasure, indeed, to report the very successful condition of the Kindergarten School. A month ago, the support of it was placed upon a new basis, which has proved very satisfactory. The School is now supported by scholarships, of the rate of one dollar a month, payable independent of the attendance of any particular child. The support of the School has been largely increased, and I trust assured independent of sickness and bad weather, for the expenses, you know, run on just the same. We have at the present time several children waiting for a vacancy to enter the School. I would like to have four more scholarships, and more frequent visits from those who are interested in the work.

In regard to all the present organizations, let us then have more earnestness, and more faithful work, remembering that we are workers in THE MASTER'S VINEYARD. And there is room, I think, for three more organizations than we have at present, which I hope in due time to see on foot. The first is a Parish Branch of the Wom-

an's Auxiliary to the Board of Missions, to be a means of drawing in new helpers, and whose purpose it shall be to widen and deepen the interest of the Parish in the Church's Missionary Work, at home and abroad. It is waiting only to be taken hold of. The second is a Cooking School, which I believe can be made a most valuable agency for promoting the happiness of homes of the present and future. It is held back, I think, only by the lack of funds to start it. The third is some organization for the younger boys, perhaps a Company of "Young Crusaders." It will also require funds, but I hope can soon be started.

The Sunday School goes steadily on, not quite up to the mark, and yet better than it might be. The lesson study on Wednesday evenings, after service, has been started again with quite a good attendance. I wish, however, that it might be more of a *Parish Bible Class* that it is, and attended by many of the older members of the Parish. This wish I hope to see realized. With the new Church year, a series of questions for written answers will be put out, for use in the older classes of the School. There are generally three questions, upon the lesson, for each day in the preceding week. I hope that the working out of the answers to these questions will become a matter of interest to all the members of the families of the Parish. The questions can, I think, be made a means of restoring that general interest of the family in the study of the Bible, which we read about in the good old days.

Our School, though numbering 13 teachers and 108 scholars, in the Main Department, and 7 teachers and 83 scholars in the Primary School, is not as large as it might be. We have room for more. Let us now work together, teachers and scholars and parents, to fill the School to its full capacity. And, teachers, let us all consecrate anew every talent that God has given us, to this work that He calls us to do, for him and for all His children.

As we pass now under the Tunnel and into the Church Yard the results of the faithful work of our Sexton meet the eye. He has been you know at death's door once this past year, but God has spared him to us, we trust for many days of usefulness. The weeds, with the start that they got, and the litter caused by the improvements, must have been a sore trial of his patience, but now again the whole property shows evidences of his constant care. Let us not forget to whom our thanks are due.

And of the Church itself? The improvements are before us, now all but complete. There have been too many willing hands engaged in making these repairs, to permit of my mentioning any by name. All, I know, have our sincere thanks. The results, I believe, justify the labour and patience that have been expended in bringing them about. Let us all now add our part of the labour, by taking care that no one ever leaves the Church feeling that it is like a barn because he has been treated as a stranger in his Father's House. The new organ will complete the transformation. That we need money for it, you have already heard. That that money will come in due time, we know. That it may come before the organ is ready for use,

is my earnest wish and hope.*

The service of the Choir has been faithful and acceptable, but there is room for much improvement, in punctuality and regularity at rehearsals and at the services,—and in the manifestation of a more earnest and devotional spirit. Let not the music of the new organ put the Choir to shame. And in the real sense of God's presence with us at our services, let us be surpassed by no other Parish.

The services themselves? And the attendance? Both were somewhat interfered with while we were out of the Church. But that time is now past. The attendance, I believe, is increasing. But the Church ought to be filled to its utmost capacity. Seventeen years ago, it was not too large for the neighbourhood. But since then the population has increased, I suppose three-fold. Let us all work this Winter to prove that our building is too small, and I believe that by God's help we can do so.

The prizing of every opportunity that comes to us of assembling in God's House, at those services which the Church provides, is a good indication of earnestness in our spiritual life. This applies to the two week-day evening services, and the daily morning service that will be held during Advent and Lent, as well as those upon the Lord's Day. At this morning service I hope to see as many of the older folk as can come, and a good number of boys and girls on their way to school. Let us by attending it endeavour to realize the truth of the Advent message, "The Kingdom of God is at hand."

But the real test of the depth of our religious convictions is, I may say, two-fold. First, inasmuch as we are taught that covetousness is the root of all evil, if our religious life is true and real, it will lead us to strike at the root of the evil, by deliberately, and conscientiously, setting apart a fair share of the bounty which God gives us, whether that be large or small,—as not our own but His. How much a fair share is, you must decide for yourselves. In what way you will give it back to God, you must also determine. But you are not honouring God, if you only give Him crumbs, when you might give Him loaves. We hope not for a beggarly but for a plenteous reward. Let us, then, bring forth plenteously, by God's help, the fruit of good works.

And the other, and supreme, test of our earnestness, is in the manifestation of obedience to Our Lord's direct command;—"Do this,"—that is, Take part in memorial service, and partake of this spiritual food and drink,—"**DO THIS**, in remembrance of me." If an unbeliever objects that professing Christians lead such bad lives, and is talking only about hangers on, who never come to The Lord's Table, you can answer him according to his folly.

And so, above all other privileges, we should prize this one of regularly feeding upon Christ,—His forgiveness, and His strength, and His love. If we prize it as we should, we will not feel that once a month is plenty often enough. Then it is only too apt to become once in two months, three, twelve,—or once in a lifetime. Rather let the numbers that gather weekly around The Lord's Table be an assurance to us all, the best that we could have, of our desire to

"Grow in Grace."

And here let me say that those who believe that it is right for them to retain membership in some other body of Christians, if they can join with us in the Creed, will yet be welcome at The Lord's Table, at least during the present Rectorship. It is The LORD'S TABLE. Whom would you refuse access to it, but those to whom the Church refuses that access, by the rubric at the beginning of the Communion Office?

But to the Children of the Church, and to those who desire to share, by membership, *the full privileges of the Church of Christ*, Her voice is plain enough. You must in the presence of the Congregation,—and before the Bishop, who holds with regard to us the office of a apostle with its authority, having now come to years of discretion, witness your purpose to live, by God's help, as a member of the Church of Christ ought to live. In so doing you will receive, through faith, with the imposition of the Bishop's hands, the Grace of Confirmation, whereby alone you can properly enter upon the Christian Life. It will be to you only a beginning, but it is the natural and proper beginning for a Child of God to make. And we hope to have the Bishop with us, for the purpose of administering the Rite of Confirmation, on the evening of Wednesday, February 21st. Shortly after Christmas, it is my purpose to begin preparatory lectures, but meanwhile I want to talk with those who are ready to consider the matter at all. Do not wait for urging, but come forward as you ought to come, of your own accord. Let us talk about any difficulties that may be in the way, frankly, and freely. I know that there are many that ought to come forward this year. Perhaps before another year, the opportunity will have passed forever.

Of the Offerings I cannot now speak at length. They are, as perhaps you know, considerably below what they ought to be. I hope soon to consider the whole matter with you but meanwhile let us have the old custom restored, of every family laying by something each week, as an offering for Missions, to be presented on the Quarterly Missionary Sunday. Only a few of the envelopes for this purpose, which are by the door, have lately been taken out. Let them be hung up in your houses, and while receiving a *regular* offering, let them also be used for "gathering up the fragments," the odd pennies, and nickels, and let us look forward further to the time when the Parish, after amply providing for its own needs, can give largely of its bounty, for the needs of the Church in the world.

The statistics of the year past are as follows:— Baptisms, 13; Confirmations, 11; Marriages, 1; Burials, 3; Communicants, (as reported in May, but not since revised) 134. The Rectory Memorial Fund has to its credit about \$1,050.00.

There is much that I have had to leave unsaid. There are fields of activity the needs of which we must consider at some future time. There are helpers, that we cannot thank by name. The blessings that the year has brought can only be mentioned in general terms. And now, as we enter, dear friends, upon the eighth year of Parish life, let us mark it by raising higher the ideal of all our aims;

—for the Parish, a life of earnestness, depth and broad sympathies,—and for ourselves, a life of truer, humbler consecration to the service. Content, indeed, with such things as God gives us, yet let us never be content with half a life when God offers us the whole. I will now close with words that, though they come not from the text of God's Word, might well be the motto of a parish of His Church,—“With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, LET US STRIVE ON ;”—and then surely, “The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost,”—will be with us all, evermore.

Faithfully, your Rector and friend,

Elliston J. Perot.

ST. STEPHEN PARISH HOUSE,
November 29th, 1893.

*NOTE.—In response to the Organ Circular recently published there has been received, in cash, \$94.25, in installment pledges, \$60.00, and a promise of the last \$100.00, from a friend of the Parish. This leaves about \$320.00 yet to be raised before we are clear of debt.

FINANCIAL REPORT.

GENERAL CHURCH FUND.

DR.

To Receipts from Tithes (13 weeks)	\$ 76 52
" " " General Offerings	274 71
	351 23

Of this amount the Envelopes have contained	\$241 25
And the loose offerings have reached	109 98
	351 23

CR.

By Salary of Sexton (13 weeks)	\$ 78 00
" Amount reserved for other expenses	39 00
" Receipts of the Rector	234 23
	351 23

Average total weekly receipts at \$2270 per annum	\$ 43 65
" " " " " 2000 " "	38 46
" " " " " for the year past	25 60

For 1st quarter . . \$26 60; For 3d quarter . . \$23 95;
" 2d " . . 25 04; " last " . . 27 02.

SPECIAL RECEIPTS FOR THE QUARTER.

For the Alms Fund	\$ 10 08
From the Mite Society Collections	25 42
" " Subscriptions for Belfry	139 86
" Donations for Improvements	51 50
" Subscriptions for the Music Fund	20 70
(Apparent deficit in this fund March 1st about \$16.00)	
" Scholarships for Support of Kindergarten	79 00
(Deficit of \$20.00 Dec. 31st)	
" S. S. Offerings for Parish House Expense Fund	7 11
" " " " Book Fund	5 81
" " " " Missions	21 22
" " Advent Offerings for Japan and Alaska	15 05
" Special Offerings for Missions (\$17.00 through Woman's Auxiliary)	23 06
" Offerings for Expenses of the Church Mission	20 97
" " " St. Timothy's Hospital	14 99
" " " the Episcopal Hospital	13 24
" " " Clergy Relief Fund	19 95

Balance to Credit of the Rectory Fund	\$1,103 48
" " " " New Chancel Fund	3 12

(To which \$500 in promises is to be added.)

ST. STEPHEN CHURCH

Terrace and Hermit Streets,

WISSAHICKON, PHILADELPHIA.



Prospectus for 1895

CONCERNING PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS IN THE CHURCH,

AND

NINTH PASTORAL LETTER

1893-1894.

The Wrong Habit.

To feel that you have done your duty by putting something in the box whenever inclination has brought you to Church to service.

The Right Rule.

To give each week according to your means (taking the trouble to use an envelope), and then to come to Church *as often as you can*.

St. Stephen Church, Missabickon.

PROSPECTUS FOR 1895.

*"Endue Thy Ministers with Righteousness,
And make Thy chosen People joyful."*

JANUARY 1st, 1895.

DEAR FRIENDS:

At this opening of a new year you are asked to look upon the erection of a new Chancel for our Church, and possibly also of transepts, as the enterprise which the close of the present year ought to see accomplished without debt, and to the glory of God. Kindly look upon this plan as something that is quite within our reach when all are interested and willing to do their part. At least say or do nothing to hinder its accomplishment, and by reading carefully the following statement learn how you can lend a helping hand.

"But why want to Build a Chancel?"

Because our present Chancel and Vestry-room accommodations are entirely inadequate to our needs. The Chancel of a Church (including the "Choir" and "Sanctuary") is necessarily the part around which all the thought of Christian Worship centres. It is the place for those to be who are commissioned to lead the service, whether by singing, or offering the prayers, or reading the Bible, or preaching the Gospel-message, or ministering at the Altar. And at present there is no place for the Choristers, except in the "Nave;" the Prayer-desk and Lectern, which belong in or adjoining the "Choir" of the Church, have also very inconveniently to be placed in the Nave; and there is no place at all set apart, especially for the preaching of the Word, that is *no pulpit*. The Communion-rail is too short to accommodate our Communicants, and the Altar, or Holy Table if you prefer so to call it, is as it were stored away in a mere box-like appendix to the Nave, instead of being in a place fitted to its importance as the centre of all worship offered to Almighty God. The fact is that in architecture our present building is only a meeting-place for Christian people, rather than a fitting Temple for the offering to God of that Worship set forth in the Book of Common

Prayer, the most glorious and yet the most simple that God's children can bring. Therefore, well as this present building may have been made to serve in time past, surely there is nothing unreasonable in being dissatisfied with our present accommodations, and in desiring something better as soon as we can see the way clear to erect it. For a Church should witness to the truth it professes, as well by its architectural form as by its varied services of worship.

However, we must Raise the Money First.

Thankful that the New Year finds us practically out of debt, as we were not a year ago, it ought to be our firm resolve to remain so; and consequently we must know how we shall be able to finish without incumbrances, before beginning to build. For no Church can be truly called the House of God, that is owned even in part, either by a man holding mortgage upon it, or by workmen who have not been paid. Moreover we know that people are always more inclined to give before work is begun than afterwards. We have no right to expect help from outside the Parish, in building this Church, until we are honestly trying to do our own full part. It is estimated roughly that \$4000 (toward which \$500 is promised) will cover the cost of the Chancel, and \$3000 more that of the two transepts, which perhaps ought to be built at the same time. We want not only the building, but the building with God's abundant blessing upon it. Let us all have our own part in erecting it then, by learning to put our hands in our own pockets and give according to our means, of that which costs us something, even of our small savings or of our hard earned wages; confident that interest, patience and time will raise the money.

But it is a First Principle

with us, that those whom God has blessed should always be giving in return to Him a portion of what they earn, apart from all consideration of special undertakings such as this. "Upon the First day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come," St. Paul said. Those words deprecated in spirit as well as in letter, the necessity of collections and solicited or unwilling contributions for the extending of the Kingdom of God. They lay upon us the duty of *frequent and regular giving*, rather than of *impulsive giving*. And we know that if Christian people in general tried to live according to rule in this matter, there would be no begging necessary, for the running expenses of a parish, or even for the building of churches. The weekly offerings of the people would in time bring into the Treasury of God's Church an abundance for all objects. For the aggregate wealth of those who name the Name of Christ is a power for good, beyond all comprehension. Shame on us that so little of it finds its way back to Him.

Estimates for Current Expenses.

But before we can build churches out of our regular income, there are current expenses that have a first claim upon us, just as people cannot truly "honour the Lord with their substance" while they are living beyond their income, or failing to pay their store bills. At St. Stephen Church we are working you know under the rather peculiar system, by which from the regular income of the Church (tithes and offerings) the other current expenses are paid, before the Rector receives any salary. Then the Rector receives the balance each week, up to \$1800 per annum (according to the Constitution), and if the offerings do not provide this there is no guarantee. Last year the following estimate was made of the amount needed for the year:—

For the Sexton, at \$5 per week,	\$ 260
Coal, gas and water-rents,	180
Diocesan Convention and Episcopal Fund,	30
Amount for the Rector, according to Constitution,	1800
	<hr/>
	\$2270

Now during the last year instead of this amount the receipts have as a matter of fact reached \$1331.26, and this means that the Rector has actually received \$862.26. The average amount of offerings *asked for* per week was \$43.65, and the average actually *received* for the whole year was \$25.60. You will find further particulars in the Report on the last page.

It is evidently very desirable that our income should reach, at an early day, such an average as will more than cover our current expenses, and enable us to lay something by, each week, for the NEW BUILDING FUND. It is quite within our ability to attain this, if all will carefully note the facts and be ready to act accordingly. But the schedule of needs will be revised for the present year, and the total amount for current expenses cut down to \$2000 (in addition to the monthly offerings, now received from the Sunday School for the expenses of the Parish House). The provision in the Constitution will remain unaltered. But during the present year or until the Chancel is built, the Rector will not receive from the Parish more than \$1400, and therefore the items of our new estimate will be as follows:—

For the Sexton, at \$6 per week,	\$ 312
Coal, gas and water-rents, (Church),	153
Diocesan Convention tax (reduced),	25
Toward Organist's salary,	80
Toward supply during Rector's vacation,	30
Estimate for Rector's stipend,	1400
	<hr/>
	\$2000

It is hoped that subscriptions will be received toward the Organist's salary, as this year, amounting to \$120, so that the General Receipts may make up this salary to \$200 at the least, for the year beginning March 1st. Contributions are also asked for the support of the Parish Kindergarten (which opens the year with a deficit), and also for the Mite Fund, which is a very important factor in the finance of the Parish. All other objects for which it is our duty to contribute through the Church will be covered by MONTHLY SPECIAL OFFERING ENVELOPES of various colors, one for the last Sunday in each month. Those for the present Quarter are for Diocesan Missions (Convocation of Germantown), in January; for the Alms Fund, for use within the Parish at the Rector's discretion, in February; and for Missions to the Jews in March, or on Good Friday.

Now whatever may be thought of the general Financial Scheme of the Parish, and of the system by which boxes instead of collection plates are used to receive the offerings of the people, all those who are interested in the work that the Parish is striving to do are asked by the Rector to raise no objections during the present year, but to lend their aid in proving that when people are taught, instructed, and trusted to give according to their means, they need not also be "dunned." And the way to do your part is to give what you can *once a week*, fairly considering that it is to God your Father you are giving. Then come to Church as often as you can, whether you have anything further to give or not. But never be satisfied with the very bad habit of feeling that you have done your duty, if you have merely put something in the box whenever inclination has brought you to Church. And because experience teaches that it is the easiest way to give regularly and systematically, you had better make use of the reminder of a weekly envelope. For these two good reasons:—to be sure that the Lord's Day does not slip by without some offering from you, and in order that the Rector may have in your envelope, (without knowing how much it contains), an indication of your continued interest. About the most hopeful sign at the opening of the New Year is the fact that we have 110 people on the lists, as weekly contributors. But the amount that envelopes contain is altogether a secret matter, between yourself and God.

Now to obtain an income of \$2000 from regular offerings we need an average of \$38.46 per week. For the year past we have averaged \$25.60 and for the last quarter \$27.02. To reach the point, then, when by regular weekly offerings we will be covering all expenses and laying by for the Building Fund, we need an average of \$13 per week more this year than last. Surely that is not beyond our reach. For instance, if among those who have not been regular contributors before there are three who can and will give One Dollar a week (regularly), and six who will give fifty cents, and twelve who will give a quarter, and twenty who will give ten cents, and forty, children perhaps, to give five cents a week,—provided

the times do not get any worse, and we expect them to improve you know,—this thing is done, for the first time in our Parish history. And the understanding will be this, that of all that is received beyond \$2000 during the year, or \$1000 by June 30th, one tenth will be reserved for use at the discretion of the Rector and Vestry, (preferably for objects outside the Parish), and all the rest will go toward the Building Fund. Why not then, if you have not already done so, obtain from the Rector weekly envelopes, and do your part? You can give no answer. And we are glad to believe that the last of the prejudice against the use of the envelopes is gradually passing away.

Shall we not then hope that the end of the Second Quarter, June 30th, will see at least \$500 laid by from regular receipts, for the New Chancel, and much more in hand from other sources? For besides boxes for odd contributions toward the Fund, and for instance for Birthday Offerings, already placed in the Church and in the Sunday School, there will be a

Special Easter Offering

for the Building Fund alone. An envelope will be sent to every person within our reach, for this purpose. It will be a yellow envelope, a reminder of the Golden House that Solomon built for Jehovah. That House was none too costly, for those who had to give. And Gold was none too costly for the Magi to offer to the Infant Saviour. Let us show that we desire to honour Him too by bringing at Easter-time an offering that has cost us real, continuous, Lenten self-denial. Let it be gold, or of the value of gold, if possible. At any rate, let us have no coppers or nickels in the golden envelopes at Easter. Remember that even the silver dime coming perhaps from some small child, if it be the result of real self-denial, will be as a golden offering to the King now Risen from the dead. The envelopes will be numbered, but the amounts they contain will be known only to God the Giver of all wealth, and to him who returns the offering.

Sunday School Lenten Offerings.

Besides the individual Easter Envelopes, (which will not be sent to the members of the Sunday School unless asked for), the Bishop's permission has been obtained for devoting to the Building Fund also the Sunday School Lenten Class-offerings and Self-denial box offerings, after giving only a part for the usual object, the Children's Lenten Missionary Offering. We will set aside at least a tenth for Missions, and try to provide that this does not fall below the amount last year, \$36.30. But we will try to centre all our thoughts this Lent upon self-denial for the Building Fund, that all may have a part in it. Thus there will be many

channels through which offerings for the Building Fund, whether large or small, may from the present time be expected to come in. The amount on hand has stood at \$3.12 for six months past, and no one need be afraid to increase it, by little or by much. We have six months now before us to be raising money in. As in everything else, when people are interested, "Time is money."

THE PROGRESS OF THE PARISH.

A few words must suffice this year, in place of a printed Pastoral Letter. The closing of the year brings us many things to be thankful for, and finds the Parish better equipped for doing the Master's work than ever before. The Rector trusts that the whole ideal of our Spiritual life is higher than a year ago, and believes that the increasing attendance at the weekly Communion is an indication of this, for the reason that people dare not very often come to the Lord's Table simply to appear more in earnest than they are trying to be. The Mission has brought a blessing to all our parishes, and to all who were able by its means to come nearer to God. It was not intended to be like a hurricane, "shaking down all the unripe fruit." For the Church Militant is like a fruit-bearing tree, that gradually ripens its fruit in the sunlight, but does not produce it ripe at once. The tree lives to ripen the fruit, the fruit of Christian characters, and then to present them to Her Lord. The Mission was like a breeze of Spring, stirring the branches, and helping the ripening of the fruit by breaking away the clouds. It is the Sunlight of God's continual Presence, shining through human life, and Church service, and Sacrament, that must continue the process. Let us pray for that Presence to be with us day by day.

The Church Services.

A year's use of the new Organ has enabled a great improvement in the work of the Choir, and the rendering of the music acceptably to all. It would be well to have some more voices in training at once however for regular services, especially men's voices. And as soon as there is promise that the proposed improvements actually will be made this year, we ought to have some fresh boy-voices in training for future service also. But let no addition to our force in the Choir interfere with the tribute of prayer and praise, that ought to ascend at service time from every voice in the Congregation, as it does at present.

The work of the Sexton has been faithful, patient, and very acceptable. The Church-yard bears witness to his care, as the Church and Parish House also. The boys of the Parish however can sometimes lighten the work, by at least being careful in no way to add to it.

Our Sunday School

and Kindergarten are surely being blessed, else there would not be such a large increase in the attendance. "Labouring and learning together," teachers and scholars, that is the thought in our prayer. But as in every school, we always need a fuller measure of the spirit of self-consecration on the part of both, to Him of Whom we learn;—and more of that Discipline which, because it is the right kind, is the product only of love and mutual consideration. The Sunday School Association should consider that the Kindergarten also is under its fostering care.

Our Parish Organizations

are now, we hope, equipped for a long season of usefulness. The BROTHERHOOD OF ST. ANDREW works in its unostentatious way, in every open channel. The KNIGHTS OF TEMPERANCE, and its infant brother the YOUNG CRUSADERS, are not as some may suppose only clubs for amusement, but useful means of self-development, and improvement in the essential things of Christian manliness and discipline. The Knights now meet in our own Parish House, to their own satisfaction and the advantage of their treasury, and give promise of continuing as at present, "on top."

Of the other organizations the DAUGHTERS OF THE KING is the new comer, chartered just before the Mission. It is an order of Church women, (communicants,) banded together for loyal service to the Master and His Church, especially by drawing their sisters nearer to Him. Its sphere of service is the home or the sphere of daily labour, as well as the Church; the guild or class, as well as the Sanctuary. May the Daughters prove faithful to their motto, "Bear well the Cross, with great souled faith." Several of the guilds are now considered as departments of the work of the Daughters;—the ALTAR CHAPTER, which proves faithful at its post of honour; the MISSIONARY CHAPTER, which has shown its life by fitting out a Christmas box for St. Philip's Sunday School in Richmond, Va.; the "C. G. S." or GIRLS' GUILD (Thursday evenings); and the SEWING SCHOOL, on Saturday afternoon. The three latter always have the latch string out for more to join.

It is the MITE SOCIETY which by its patience in collecting "mites" makes possible the printing of these reports, and other important expenditures. The MOTHERS' GUILD on alternate Thursday afternoons offers a bright and sociable meeting place for those we could in no wise do without, the Mothers of the Parish. The WOMAN'S AUXILIARY, on the other Thursdays, offers the same for those who would assist in the great Commission, "Go ye, and preach the Gospel." The BABIES' BRANCH of the Auxiliary has as yet only three members, who, though too young for Sunday School, yet acknowledge by a small weekly saving that it is a missionary Church of which they are made members in Holy Baptism. Every young child in the Parish ought to be enrolled.

The Bishop of the Diocese

will visit the Parish (D. V.) on Wednesday, March 20th, to administer CONFIRMATION. May God grant that his visit shall find us outwardly a united people, and so far as qualified, also spiritually one in the bond of true unity, the Holy Communion; with no trace of mistrust or hard feeling to mar the harmony of brethren in Christ, whom God has thrown together. And if you who are reading this have never yourself been Confirmed, never enlisted in the service of Christ, then now ask yourself frankly, "Why not?" Are you, alone of all men, fit to be your own master? Is the Church's chief means of grace nothing to you?—namely the Holy Communion, the Table at which God your Father has bidden you spiritually to feed? Do you want to do your duty, or to shirk it in a cowardly way? Do you know your own weakness? What single anchor have you thrown out as a stay and safeguard of the life of your soul? If there is even the slightest inclination in your heart to consider the duty of living according to God's will and not your own, will you not come to the Class for Instruction, on Tuesday evenings at 8 o'clock, and try to learn more? And in due time make up your mind boldly and faithfully, that whatever people may say or think, you *will* come to Confirmation, to seek the inheritance of the children of God. Any friend who is a Communicant would be glad to help you make up your mind, and the Rector desires to talk it over with you at once. Know that when you are not ashamed of the Cross of Christ, but ready to submit yourself to His will,

"He is sure to bless;—
Saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs,
Answer yes."

Ever faithfully yours,

ELLISTON J. PEROT,

Rector.

REPORT OF ST. STEPHEN CHURCH FOR THE QUARTER ENDING DECEMBER 31ST, 1894.

BAPTISMS.

November 4, Ann Jane Denniston.
" 13, Violet Blanche Smith.
December 19, Walter Wynn (adult).
" 23, William Gilmore French.

BURIALS.

October 30, David Denniston.
November 15, Violet Blanche Smith.

COMMUNICANTS.

Admitted Nov. 25, Ernest Whitcoak.
Received by letter from Ireland, Dec. 18, Miss Ethel Wilson.
Admitted Dec. 25, Miss Mary Ann Hodgkinson.
Transferred to Church of St. James the Less, Dec. 31,
Mrs. Ann Vautrey,
Mrs. Mary Ann Bowden,
Miss Ann Ellen Vautrey.

1886

1901

**Fifteenth Anniversary
Memorial**

ST. STEPHEN CHURCH

MANAYUNK, PHILA.

Pastoral Letter of the Rector.

**READ ON THE SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE ADVENT,
NOVEMBER 24TH, 1901.**

PUBLISHED BY RESOLUTION OF THE VESTRY.

ST. STEPHEN CHURCH RECTORY,
Sunday Next before Advent, 1901.

MY DEAR FRIENDS OF ST. STEPHEN PARISH,

Once a year, at our anniversary season, it has been the custom of your rectors to speak to you, not in the form of a sermon, but rather in that of a letter, as from pastor to people. The custom is well worth observing because of the opportunity that it gives us of getting out of the common rut, and looking at our Parish life and duties from another point of view. And so I wish you might be able to feel that it is a different voice that speaks to you to-night, the voice of one who is reading a personal letter written to you, rather than the preacher's voice. Different voice and yet the same, for this is the ninth pastoral letter I have been privileged to write.

"The Parish of St. Stephen Church." Is there or is there not a reason for its existence? Is there a work for God which we alone can do? Why build an Episcopal Church in the midst of a community such as this? For our own gratification only? Why labor to advance its interests? Why provide it with ample buildings—with church, and parish house, and rectory? Why feel a responsibility for its "running expenses"? The query is sometimes heard, and has recently been made by those who would answer all these questions in a negative way. And we are bound to face that question "Why," to go to

the bottom of it, bound if necessary even to meet sneers against the Church, Her ministry, Her sacraments, Her right to live—to meet them with a steady, patient and abiding faith in that Church Which is our Mother. We are bound, as St. Peter says, to be “ready to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason for the hope that is in us,” a reason why we are Churchmen and Church-women, or “Episcopalians” if that suits better, and not Christians of some other name, or of no name at all. And it has occurred to me that you will have a sufficient answer to give when you need it, if I make use of this occasion to tell you about a certain book of which you ought to know more than you do.

It is a book in which almost everyone before me has an interest, because your names are written in it. And yet very few of you have ever seen it. You could if you wanted to, but still you have not, because you have never expressed the desire. Your names are written in it, the very names by which you are known and your lives recorded in Heaven; and although this book is not the “Book of Life,” I take it that everything written here can also be found written there, unless indeed the duplicate, of the record which still stands in black and white in our book, may have been blotted out already by God’s angel’s hand, from that other Book in Heaven. If so—alas! alas! For the things recorded in this book of which I speak, are the acts of God’s minister, in dispensing to the Father’s children on earth God’s own means of grace, a score which God’s angels do not disdain to keep. I would have you think of it as a section of the earthly edition of the Book of God. It is

the Register of the Church of God in St. Stephen Parish. It contains the records of the Parish extending back over the fifteen years of its independent existence, which years we may consider as being completed by our services to-night and on Wednesday and Thursday next.

I open the Parish Register therefore, and I find first a history of the origin of “St. David’s Mission,” of the earlier services, and of the service which was held fifteen years ago next Wednesday night, that at which the new-born independent parish was given its name “St. Stephen,” by Bishop Morris of Oregon, who was present, “in memory of the fact that St. David’s, Manayunk, the mother-parish, was built under the influence of gentlemen connected with St. Stephen’s Church, Philadelphia.” (It is curious that our Fifteenth Anniversary Service, on Thanksgiving Eve, falls on the same day of November, the 27th, on which that first service was held, fifteen years ago.) Then follows the official manuscript copy of our Articles of Association and By-Laws, and a brief historical outline of events in the later history of the Parish.

And here I would refer to another interesting record, which was begun in the Parish Register, but which for lack of room is now kept in a separate book, namely a List of Services, in which every service held in the church is recorded. The same is true also of the Rector’s memorandum of the offerings from Sunday to Sunday, kept in another separate book because it long ago outgrew the space allowed for it in our old, dignified, leather-bound Parish Register. The list of services

indicates that in fifteen years 2166 Sunday services have been held, 2453 week-day services, a total of 4619. Of these services 859 have included celebrations of the Holy Communion. The record of offerings in the other book shows that the total receipts during this time have been just about \$48,000. Of this amount about \$4600, or almost one-tenth, has been given to missions, hospitals, etc., outside of our own Parish; \$18,300 has been spent in permanent improvements; \$25,100 used for current expenses, etc.

I turn over some blank pages, now, and come to the first section of the Parish Register proper. This is the "List of Families of the Regular Worshipers of the Church," which our Constitution requires the Rector to keep. The list was carefully rewritten about a year ago, but because a considerable proportion of the families of every parish are constantly changing, such a record is not as valuable as might be supposed. However, our record is kept, and when any new person attends Church regularly enough to be considered a "regular worshipper," taking out envelopes for instance, or otherwise evincing an active interest *in the services* of the Church for a considerable period of time, that person's name is entered in the List of Families, space being left for the names of the other members of that family when they shall become regular worshippers too. Parallel columns afford room to record whether or not each person is Baptized, Confirmed, Entered as a regular Communicant at St. Stephen's, and a regular attendant at the services. No name once entered on the List of Families is ever erased from it, because neither

the privilege of voting nor anything else really depends, now, on whether a name is on this list or not. But if a person whose name is on this list is transferred to another parish, or dies, record is made of that transfer or death.

The next list, and more important, is the record of Baptisms. Here is a different sort of list, a record of things done and done once for all. It is a record of admissions into the Church of Christ on earth, each record bearing the signature of the clergyman who, as God's representative, performed the service. It is a record of God's work, committed to His duly ordained ministers to do. For my own part I have not the slightest doubt that these same records have been entered on the Book of Life in Heaven. For the act of the minister in baptizing a child is really God's own act. How solemn is that thought as we look over the list! What a blessed thing it makes it, to be baptized into the Church of Christ, even if it is a little unconscious child that is brought!

And in fifteen years how the figures pile up and the names of those involved! For each record contains the names of the parents and of the sponsors or witnesses, and the signature of the minister, besides the date of birth and the date and place of Baptism.

Fifteen years and in these years the record of 329 admissions into the Church, an average of 22 each year; 21 in the year just passed, and 39 in the year ending last May. 329 Baptisms. I look over the list and find that 49 persons of this number were adults who had come to the age for Confirmation—some of them to old age—before

being baptized, *having been deprived of the privilege* of membership in Christ in their childhood, by the carelessness, indifference, worldiness or ignorance of their parents; the other 280 have been children, brought to Christ and enlisted in His Name in early life, as the Church teaches that every child, and especially every child of Christian parents, ought to be. Or again we look over the 329 names and we find that many, oh! so many of them, have already gone forward into that unseen world beyond. Fifty to my own personal knowledge, and probably several more, their earthly account already closed, of which our Baptismal list records the spiritual beginning! And what strange life-histories are here! The child, entered as Christ's soldier and servant, at our little font in the Baptistery; another born again into the Kingdom on earth only a moment before God's angel, hovering over the sick-bed, called him home; or the aged man or woman, who has gone through life unbaptized, perhaps without knowing whether baptized or not, and who, on the death-bed on which the gray hairs are laid, has sought for the grace of Holy Baptism ere it is too late. Or again, the boy or girl, dedicated to Christ in infancy and now in the midst of life's battle! How various these records are of the spiritual life-histories of Christian children, and boys and girls, and men and women!

We pause—and then we turn over blank pages till we come to writing again. What is this? Pages ruled in several columns and divided across the page, by red lines, into sections of half a page, more or less. It is the record of Confirmations—257 of them since 1886, and twenty-five in 1901. In the first column the Rector's

certificate that on a certain date these persons named were confirmed, by the Bishop of the Diocese. In each case the bishop named is our own dear Bishop Whitaker, who began his work here in Pennsylvania in the same year that our record opens, and who now is prostrated on a bed of sickness, worn by over-work. God grant that he may be spared to confirm those who shall come forward next March to receive the Laying on of Hands! In four cases the clergyman's signature to this certificate is the Rev. Mr. Bonnell's, in one the Rev. Mr. Ridgely's, in one the Rev. Mr. Shepherd's, and in eight of the fourteen cases the present Rector has presented the class, there having been no class in the year after the Rev. Mr. Bonnell died. Then, after a column of numbers the names follow, those of each year in alphabetical order, first the men and then the women. A note of the date of birth and of the place of Baptism completes each record. 257 names; 98 men and boys, 159 women and girls. Volunteers in God's army, seekers after God's grace and help in leading an earnest Christian life. What a varied list it is too, old men and women, young men and maidens, coming side by side to renew the vows of their Baptism and to receive the gift of God's Spirit—coming at all ages, but how much better when they have come in early life, with years of possible service and usefulness before them, "not ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified," and not afraid to take God at His word and to believe in His promises! [Of the 257 at least 65 had been baptized in or been connected with Christian bodies of other names and thence had found their home in our dear Episcopal Church.] Sad to think

that of the names in the list some apparently expected little from their Confirmation and got what they expected; others too to-day are utterly neglecting the privileges of grace which Christ died to give them; yet others—thank God they are few—have deserted Christ's Church in which they enlisted of their own free will and accord! But still a very hopeful list it is, when we think of the patience and grace of God. That grace will even bring back the careless and the wanderer in due time, unless the wanderer's heart be too much hardened by wilfulness and sin.

Again we turn over the blank pages, left for future Confirmations, and this time there meets us perhaps the most important of all the records. It is the Communicant List of the Church, the list of those who have been and for the most part are, properly speaking, members of St. Stephen Church, and who, if they are actual attendants at the services or actual contributors, have now the right to vote. And it too tells a story full of interest. Down the left-hand side is a list of numbers, one on each line, and amounting now to a total of 419. Opposite each number is a name, and twenty-nine of these have been added since our last anniversary. After the name is a space about two inches wide, that records how and when that name was added to the list. Some read "Admitted Palm Sunday," or "Admitted Easter," of such a year, mostly those who have been confirmed at St. Stephen's during that Lent.

Others read "Received by Letter from" this parish or that, on such a date. A few—possibly it is only one—reads, "Admitted privately, without Confirmation," and

in this case the name is afterward crossed out in straight lines of red ink, for the person was admitted to the Holy Communion upon her death-bed. All the names of those who are known to have died, 29 out of 419, are crossed out by these straight red lines, and note of the date of death is made on the far side of the page. But there are also many others whose names have been erased, this time not in red ink but in lead-pencil, because they are still in the land of the living, and lead-pencil is easily rubbed out. These are the persons who have taken letters of transfer to some other parish, or whose names have been removed from the list at their own request, and they number 83. 29 and 83—112 names out of 419, leaving 307 names still, some of whom, however, are careless and indifferent, and some cannot be traced, having moved away without taking letters of transfer or perhaps having died. When it came to making the report to the Convention last Spring the Rector found that there were 223 of the 308 names that ought to be reported under our diocesan law, as communicants of this Parish. But how many unrealized possibilities there are in our Communicant List! What great spiritual blessings stand open to our people, in the services and at the Lord's Table; which we are all too slow to go in and possess for ourselves!

But again I hastily turn, and now the word "Marriages" heads the open page. Lives united together in God's Holy Bond. Forty-six new families formed in these fifteen years; six this past year. No, it is not only in the sad things of life that the Church sympathizes with Her children. She blesses also their joys. She

prays for blessings always, even though human frailty and selfishness so often drive away the joy that God would give. "Till death us do part"—so only can that fullest benediction rest. So only can the perfect union of heart and soul be attained, that turns earth's joys into the heavenly peace of the true Christian home, and inspires both man and woman to live their most unselfish life. "Till death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance," and with that vow the troth has been plighted.

Once again we turn the leaves, and what is this? The record of deaths? No. In the Parish Register death has lost something of its sting. Deaths indeed, but ere the record is made, the Church has pointed out the hope that faith can grasp, anchored safely in the land beyond the river. And so here it is the record of the solemn Burial Service, still attested in each case by the signature of the duly ordained priest or minister of the Church of Jesus Christ. One hundred and sixty-five funerals—thirteen since a year ago. Among them this last year was our old and faithful sexton, George Peat, who entered into rest January 28, 1901. Of those 165, I find that 54, about one-third of all, have been grown men, for the most part fathers, some grandfathers. 37 have been women, some of whom were from the number of our faithful workers in the Parish. Four young men and four young women in the early prime of life; 66 children, taken away, most of them, ere the time came to test their Baptismal grace and to meet and grapple with the temptations of this naughty world. But over all alike the Church has spoken Her parting words of

benediction. "Earth to earth"—yes; "ashes to ashes, dust to dust," but that is not all. It is but the planting of the seed. It is indeed but the committal of EARTH to earth, and why should that be so sad? For at the Church's hand this committal is a most glorious act of faith. The words are spoken looking forward "to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ, at Whose second coming in glorious majesty to judge the world, the earth and the sea shall give up their dead, and the corruptible bodies of those that sleep in Him shall be changed and made like unto His own glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself."

Fifteen years, my friends. And what shall we say of them? Earth to earth? Ah, no. There has been a soul in those fifteen years. The Spirit of God has been here in our midst, and is still. God is working, and will work, by His Spirit, through His Church. And where the Spirit of God is, there is something more than earth to be cast to earth. In His Church, duly organized and commissioned by the Master Himself, we have a true part of His Body, His Living Body, over which the gates of Hell shall not prevail. May God give us grace to be loyal to Her in the years to come, and to love Her even as we love Christ, Her Head and our Master.

And if we are to be loyal to Her, then we must also while God spares us here, remain loyal to one another, too. It is by working patiently side by side in the days that are to come, that we can make our beloved Parish all that she ought to be, for our own good, for the wel-

fare of our community and for the glory of our Master. Let us be willing, when there is something to be gained for Her cause, to yield a point or two of our own pleasure or wish, and let us open not only our purses but also our hearts to one another, in the fellowship of our common service. Let us strive together to realize to the full those words of our new year's text :

"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office ; so we being many are one Body in Christ, and everyone members one of another."

Faithfully your Rector,

ELLISTON J. PEROT.